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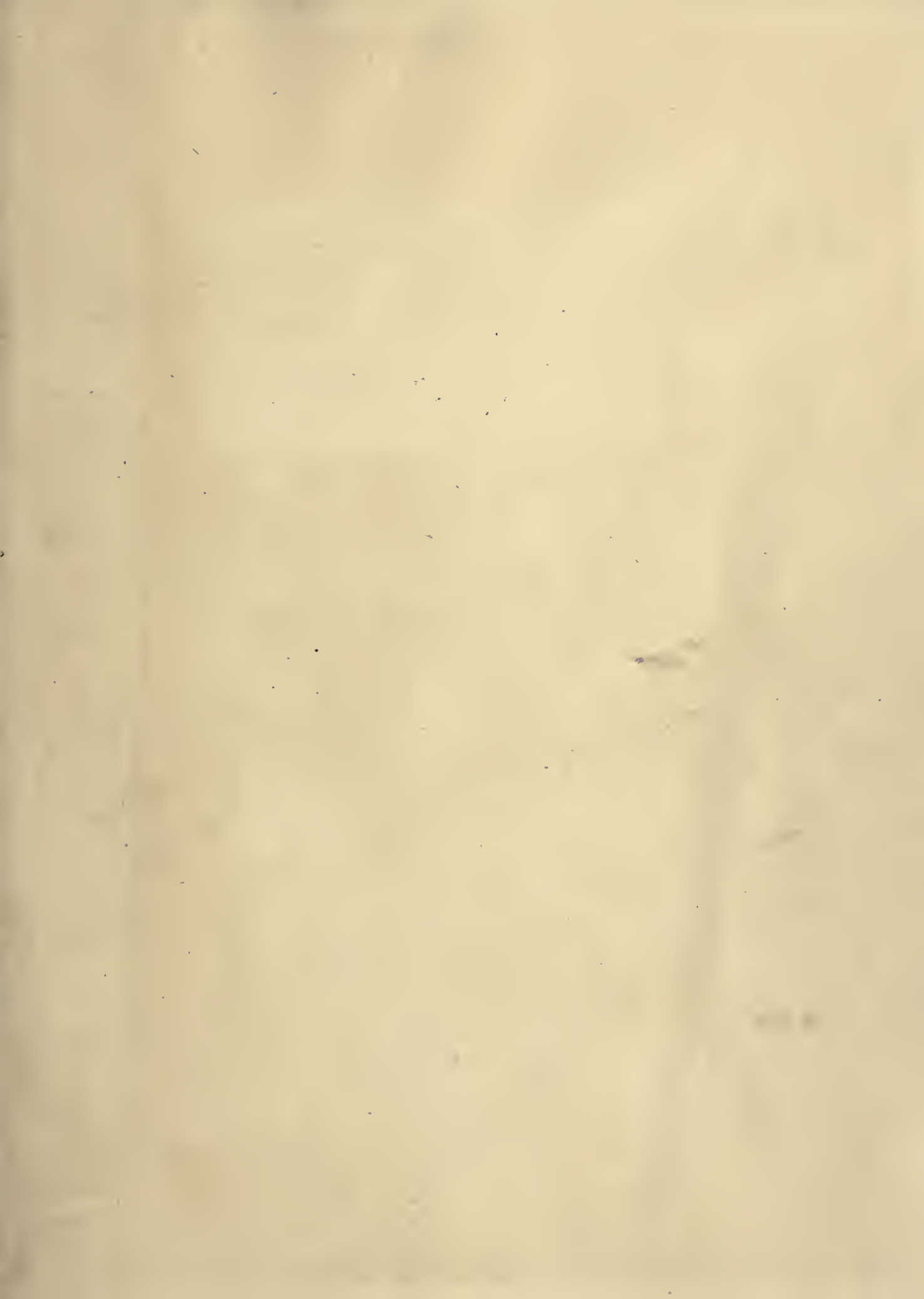
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Fac-similes illustrating the labours of William Caxton
at Westminster, and the Introduction of
Printing into England.

WITH A
Memoir of our First Printer,
AND
Bibliographical Particulars of the
Illustrations.

BY
FRANCIS COMPTON PRICE.



LONDON,
Privately Printed, 1877.

[*The Four-hundredth Anniversary.*]

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The number of copies of these fac-similes has been strictly limited to one hundred and twenty-five, of which this is the 108th

F. L. Price



William Caxton.



Ince the Rev. John Lewis, of Margate, published, so long ago as 1737, "The Life of Mayster Wylliam Caxton," hardly a new fact, scarcely a fresh incident, affecting the biography of our first printer has been recorded; and to that work all subsequent biographers of Caxton owe their material. The incomparable monograph of Mr. William Blades has, however, rendered the subject capable of being satisfactorily studied. It is not too much to expect, through the labours of Mr. Van Praet and others, that in the archives of Bruges there will one day be found interesting particulars concerning those who worked with COLARD MANSION, and we may hope that among the particulars yet to be discovered, many *new facts* relating to "The chief Englishman at Bruges" will not be wanting.

In the fifteenth century the citizens of London disregarded the legal majority of man, and the indenture of an apprentice was always so drawn that the civic majority was not attained until the completion of the twenty-fourth year. We find in the vellum folio of the Mercers' Company [the entries extending from 1344 to 1464] that Caxton was entered apprentice to Robert Large in 1438 as appears by the following under that date:—

It. John large,	} les appñtices de	iiij ^s
It. Willm Caxton		

Ten, eleven, or twelve years was no uncommon term of apprenticeship at this time. Reckoning, however, the term of Caxton's servitude at the minimum of seven years, he could not have been more than seventeen years old at the date of entry, and therefore cannot have been born before 1421. The date of Caxton's birth being thus approximately set down, we have his own statement that he was born in "Kent in the Weeld," though topographers are not agreed in what part of the "garden of England" the Weald is to be found.

At Bruges.

Caxton's master, Sir Robert Large, "who dwelled in Lothbury," and "whose house standeth in two parishes, St Margaret's and St Olive's," became Lord Mayor in 1439, and at his death, in 1441, bequeathed to his apprentice, who had served him but three years, a legacy of twenty marks (a sum equal to about 150*l.* of the present value of money). A year after Sir Robert's death, Caxton went abroad, still an apprentice, to serve the remainder of his term in Flanders — probably to conclude business engaged in by his late master, who had been one of the richest and most powerful merchants in the city of London. It should be remembered that Bruges, like Florence and Venice, was far in advance of London as a commercial centre in Caxton's time, and at that city the English merchants found their mart for the large consignments of wool, then our chief product, and the Mercers' foreign trade far exceeded that of all the other Companies. Caxton took up his residence in the "*Domus Anglorum*," a semi-fortified structure, erected to guard the foreigner against any turbulent outbreak of the populace, whose ignorant jealousy easily imagined that the foreign merchants were ruining their nation — and he dwelled in the Burgundian Capital, saving rare visits first to London and then to Ghent and Cologne, for thirty-five years.

Having worked out the three or four remaining years of his apprenticeship, Caxton was soon in business on his own account, and so prosperously, that in 1450 he was accepted as security for one John Granton, a merchant of the Wool-staplers, who had their Staple of Wools at Calais, in the sum of one hundred and ten pounds, which sum may be estimated at ten times its present value. By an entry in the before-mentioned folio of the Mercers' Company, we see that Caxton was admitted to their livery in 1453; but for which glimpse, we lose sight of him for ten years — during which time, however, he must have continued to be successful, for in 1463 he became Governor of "The English Nation" at Bruges. This Association enjoyed great privileges — granted by Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy. The Mercers' appear to have originated the guild, which was the Company of Merchant Adventurers under another name, with leave for other great Companies to share in the membership. In the following year King Edward the Fourth issued a Commission and appointed Sir Richard Whitehill from his Court, and William Caxton, "a most fit person," to be his ambassadors and deputies to the Duke of Burgundy "for the purpose of confirming an existing

At Cologne.

treaty of commerce, [which had been in force for a long time, but would expire in 1465] or, if necessary, for making a new one." These negotiations were unsuccessful, and the commercial relations between the two countries were interrupted, and not restored until the accession in 1467 of Charles the Rash, who wedded, in the following year, Margaret, sister of the English King. The marriage was solemnized at Bruges with great rejoicings, of which an account by an eye-witness may be found in the Paston Letters.

Caxton retained his post as Governor of The English Nation to 1469—but about this time some reverse of fortune apparently befell him. A Judgment, dated May 12, 1469, sets forth a dispute between an Englishman and a Frenchman who agree to abide by the decision of William Caxton and Thomas Perrot as arbitrators and common friends—but Caxton being obliged to leave Bruges for some cause not mentioned in the document, a full court of merchants was summoned, and the judgment declared in the names of the arbitrators. From Bruges, Caxton went to Ghent, and afterwards to Cologne; he was probably in the train of Edward IV., when that monarch was seeking refuge from the machinations of the great Earl of Warwick. But it is idle to speculate as to what *may have been*, which is always the greatest barrier to our observing what *is*. It is certain that Caxton received some appointment in the Court of the English wife of Charles, and became a favourite with the noble lady. In conversation, the Dukes elicited from him an acknowledgement that, "having no great charge or occupation," he had, before her Grace's arrival, commenced the translation, from French into English, of *Le Recueil des Histoires de Troye*, by Raoul le Fèvre. Discouraged, he had abandoned the task; but he tells us in his prologue to "The Recuyell," that his noble mistress made him fetch his "five or six quires," and submit them to her inspection; and she "commanded me straightly to continue and make an end of the residue then not translated—whose dreadful commandment I durst in no wise disobey, because I am servant unto her said grace, and receive of her yearly fee." Thus the mercer becomes lost in the courtier; the translation he began as an amusement he concludes apparently with but little satisfaction, and it is finished at length "in the holy city of Cologne in September 1471." The statements of Caxton have led many bibliographers to the opinion that the "Recuyell" was printed at Cologne by Ulrich Zel, who would thus be

At Westminster.

made the instructor of Caxton, who tells us in the epilogue to the third book that it was during its progress through the press that he learned the art; but Mr. Blades declares in favour of Colard Mansion, with many a cogent reason. My own opinion is that Caxton always refers to the *translation* of the "Recuyell" finished at Cologne, and that the "Recuyell," as afterwards "The Game and Playe of the Cheffe Moralyfed," were printed at Bruges. Be that as it may, soon after "The Game and Playe of the Cheffe" was printed, Caxton took leave of the land of his adoption, and turned his thoughts towards England, where he arrived laden with a freight more precious than the most opulent merchant adventurer ever dreamed of, to endow his country with that inestimable blessing, the printing press—the instrument destined to relieve mankind from the thralldom of ignorance, superstition, and vice. Towards the end of the year 1476, or the beginning of 1477, we find Caxton in occupation at Westminster, his press erected in the Almonry, which was a building erected by a most admirable and excellent personage, whom the printers of England might well regard as their patroness—Margaret of Richmond, mother of King Henry the Seventh, who was the great patroness of learning, and, as we know, the friend of Erasmus. She founded the Almonry, not for the purpose of encouraging printing, it is true, but for that of extending her charity to the necessitous of the neighbourhood, of which some vestige still continues in a dole which is given every Saturday to the poor of Westminster in the Hall of the College of St. Peter. As far as can be made out, the Almonry stood near the great west door of the Abbey, at the entrance of what is now called Tothill-street, and as a matter of fact the Almonry was then included within the Abbey precincts. For many years an old building [which tumbled down in 1846] was pointed out as Caxton's house, but it was proved to be no older than the time of Charles the Second. This did not prevent parts of the woodwork being made into walking-sticks and snuff-boxes, and presented to various patrons of literature as genuine relics of our famous printer. Caxton himself tells us that he lived in the Almonry, and from the same source we know the very sign of the house he inhabited—*The Red Pale*, which, it has been conjectured, might stand for *Red Pole*; but the far greater likelihood is that the sign had a *heraldic* significance, and was a shield of one of the heraldic metals, a pale *gules*. A curious hand-bill advertisement, printed and circulated by Caxton *ante* 1480, furnishes us with these particulars. Of this interesting relic, the earliest English "broad-side" extant,

At Westminster.

particulars are appended to the *fac-simile* [Plate 2]. From his house in the Almonry, Caxton issued all his important works, except the "Recuyell," the first edition of "The Game and Playe of the Chesse," both printed abroad, and the "History of Jafon," which last may have been printed either at Bruges or Westminster. When Caxton started in England his whole stock of type consisted of two founts, a *church* or *text* type and a *secretary* type. These founts he purchased in the Low Countries and brought with him. When they began to wear he procured new founts, with a small fount of larger size for headings; but whether Caxton at any period of his career cast his own letter seems now impossible to ascertain with any certainty.

For some time he was busied with the work of his patron, Anthony Wydevile, Earl Rivers, "The Dictes or Sayengis of the Philosophres." This work is dated November 18th, 1477, the earliest certainty, and the real date of the Caxton anniversary. If we had a book of Caxton's, as we have of Colard Mansion's, *Primum opus impressum per Willelmum Caxton*, it would be a different matter. As it is we must work upon the "Dictes" of November, 1477, until we know more. The "Dictes" is especially interesting from the fact that the conclusion of it affords us a specimen of Caxton's own style of literary composition. His patron, the Earl, with whom he seems to have been on the most affectionate terms, having omitted to translate certain conclusions of Socrates "towchyng women," Caxton supplies the omission. These passages are reproduced in the *fac-similes* [Plates 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8].

About one hundred separate works have come down to us from the Westminster presses, of which number no less than thirty-three are known by single copies or fragments only. If so great a proportion of his work is unique, how much is lost altogether? We are possessed in the various public and private collections, all told, of nearly six hundred volumes from Caxton's presses. Had Caxton's opportunities allowed, he would probably have used wood-engraving to a much greater extent; the chief difficulty was no doubt experienced in obtaining the services of an engraver—many of the blocks being badly cut into, and the draughtsman's work thereby destroyed. The best specimen of the wood-engraver's art his works afford, and one which has been much praised for its

At Westminster.

composition and feeling, is the well-known 'Crucifixion' [*Plate 9*] frequently seen in the books of Wynkyn de Worde, who received great credit for it until its earlier use was discovered as the frontispiece to Caxton's 'Fifteen Oes and other prayers.'

Caxton continued to work at Westminster till his death, which took place at the close of the year 1491. He lies buried in his own parish church-yard [St. Margaret's]. The precise spot is not known. The record of his burial may be seen in the Churchwarden's account books, which give evidence of a funeral more costly than usual :

It^m atte Bureyng of William Caxton for iiij torches . . . vjs. viijd.
It^m for the belle atte fame bureyng vjd.

No stone marked the burial place until the Roxburghe Club erected the simple tablet in the Church of St. Margaret. More than a century after Caxton's death, there was laid (in 1618) side by side with this Kentish worthy—this citizen-ambassador, author, and artizan—the headless corse of one of England's greatest children, Sir Walter Raleigh.

Plates.

PLATE I.

AN INDULGENCE granted by John Kendale, as legate from Pope Sixtus IV., to those contributing to the defence of Rhodes against the Turks—on vellum, dated 1480. In favour of "*Symoni Mountfort et Emme uxori ei. . . ultimo die Mēfis marcij.*" The fac-simile is from the unique original preserved in the British Museum, and bears the *earliest* instance of printed initials in England. The wavy appearance of some of the lines is due to the unequal expansion and contraction of the vellum through damp. Purchased in 1846. [C. 18. e. 2.]

5.

A paper communicated to the Society of Antiquaries by Sir Frederic Madden in 1837,* informs us that John Kendale was Grand Prior of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in England, and was remarkable from having been the subject of the earliest contemporary medal in existence, of which the unique specimen is now in the cabinet of the Duke of Devonshire, bearing date of same year as the issue of the Indulgence. On the medal he is styled *Turcopolier* or General of the Infantry of the Order—the office of which was annexed to that of Grand Prior of England.

Kendale was a person of the greatest influence, for, beside the power he had obtained from the Pope of granting Indulgences, he acquired the confidence of Edward IV. and Henry VII., who employed him in political negotiations of great moment. In 1495 he was accused of taking part in a plot against Henry's life, but he was fortunate or crafty enough, not only to escape the King's anger, but to grow in stability with his Majesty. In the Act of Attainder against Perkin Warbeck's adherents, though the Prior's name appears, a saving clause is drawn in his favour.

* *Archæologia*, vol. xxvii, p. 172.



Patet Johannes Kentale Curapellanus Rhodi ac commissarius De sanctissimo in christo patre
et domino nostro domino Sigismo divina providencia papa quarto et Vigore litterarum suarum pro expe-
dicionem contra perfidos turcos christiani nominis hostes. in defensionem insule Rhodi & fidei catholice
et facta et facienda concessam ad infra scripta p. Uniuersum orbem deputatus. Dilecti nobis in christo
^{Paulus apud theopet de Pando copiar} Salute in domino semper eterna Prouenit ex tue deuotionis affectu quo romanam
ecclesiam reuerentis. Ne te huic se & necessitate expeditioni gratum reddis et liberale. Et petitiones tuas illas preser-
tim que conscientie pacem et anime tue salutem respiciunt ad exauditionis gratiam admittamus. Hinc est quod nos
tuas deuotionis supplicationibus inclinati. tibi ut aliquem idoneum et discretum presbiterum secularem vel cu-
iusvis ordinis regularem in tuum possis eligere confessoze. qui confessione tua diligenter audita pro commissis
et de quibusvis criminibus excessibus et delictis quantiscumque grauibz et enormibz. etiam si talia fuerint propter que se-
des apostolica sit quouis modo merito consulenda. Iniectionis manu in episcopum. vel superiore. ac libertatis ecclesi-
astice offese. seu conspirationis in personam aut statum romani pontificis. vel cuiusvis offese inobediencie. aut rebel-
lionis sedis eiusdem. ac presbiteriorum. casibus duntaxat exceptis. In reformationis semel tantum. In alijs vero non reser-
uatis tocens quocumque fuerit oportum debitam absolutionem impendat et penitentiam salutarem iniungere. Nec om-
nium peccatorum tuorum de quibus coram contritus et ore confessus fueris. semel in dicta et semel in mortis articulo plena-
tiam remissione et indulgentiam auctoritate apostolica concedere possit. dicta auctoritate qua per ipsum sedis lras sus-
ficiendi facultate muniti fungimur in hac parte indulgemus. In quorum fidem lras nostras Sigismi nostri ap-
pensione munitas fieri iussimus atqz mandauimus. Dat. ^{et ceteris} ^{duo apud} ⁱⁿ ^{apud}
Millesimo quateringentesimo octogesimo Anno domini



PLATE II.

CAXTON'S HAND-BILL ADVERTISEMENT, *ante* 1480. The first "broadside" printed in England. From the copy in Bodley's Library at Oxford. (*Douce fragments.*)

Of this interesting relic a second copy is in the possession of Earl Spencer. The advertisement refers to an *Ordinale* of the Church of Salisbury, printed in the same type; a collection of rules to show how to determine the celebration of more than one office on the same day, *ad usum Sarum*. These collections were called "pyes"—the "pye" of *two* commemorations governed the moveable feast of Easter, which ruled Whitsuntide; and the "pye" of *three* commemorations included the offices for Easter, Whitsuntide, and Trinity.

This advertisement has been already treated of in the Memoir, *q.v.*

If it please any man spirituel or temporel to bye any
pyes of two and thre comemoraciōs of salisbury use
enpryntid after the forme of this preset lettre whiche
ben wel and truly correct, late hym come to westmo;
nester in to the almonestrye at the reed pale and he shal
haue them good chepe .*. .

Supplico stet cedula



PLATES III., IV., V., VI., VII., VIII.

THE EPILOGUE to the first edition of the "Dictes or sayengis of the philosophres,"
1477. From the copy in the British Museum. [C. 21. d.]

That the 18th of NOVEMBER is the real date of the Caxton anniversary is shown by the unique colophon to Earl Spencer's copy of the first edition — this distinction is as follows :

Thus endeth this booke of the dyctes and notable wyse sayenges of the phylosophers late translated and drawen out of frenshe into our englishe tonge by my forsaide lord Cherle of Ryuers and lord Skales ✠ and by hys coman-
dement sette in forme and emprynted in this manere as ye maye here in this booke see Which was fynished the ✠
xviij ✠ day of the moneth of Novembre ✠ & the sevententh yere of the regne of kyng Edward the ✠ fourth ✠

This book, which has been adopted as marking the introduction of printing into England, is a volume of seventy-five leaves, seventy-two of which are occupied by Anthony Wydevile's translation. The last six pages, here re-produced, are from Caxton's own hand.

Here endeth the book named the dictes or sayengis
of the philosophhres enprynted by me William
Capton at Westmestre the yere of our lordz .M.
CCCC. Lxxvii. Whiche book is late translated out of
frenshe into englyssh . by the Noble and puissant lordz
Lordz Antone Erle of Ryvers lordz of Scales & of the
Ile of Wyght / Defendour and directour of the siege apos-
tolique for our holy fader the Pope in this Royame of
Englondz and Gouvernour of my lordz Prynce of Wales
And It is so that at suche tyme as he had accomplysshid
this sayd Werk / it liked him to sende it to me in certayn
quayzers to ouersee / Whiche forthwith I sawe & fonde therein
many grete . notable . and Wyse sayengis of the philosophhres
Acordynge vnto the bookes made in frenshe Whiche I had
ofte afore redde / But certaynly I had seen none in englyssh
til that tyme / And so afterwarde I cam vnto my sayd
lordz & told him how I had redde & seen his book / And
that he had don a meritorie dede in the labour of the transla-
cion therof in to our englyssh tunge / Wherin he had deservid
a singuler laboure & thank &c / Thanne my sayd lordz desired
me to ouersee it and Where as I sholde fynde faute to cor-
recte it / Wheremy I answered vnto his lordship that I coude
not amende it / But if I sholde so presume I might apaire
it / For it was right wel & connyguly made & translated
into right goodz and fayr englyssh / Notwithstondynge he
willed me to ouersee it & shewid me dyuerse thinges whi-
che as him semed myght be left out as diuerse lettres mis-
sues sent from Alisander to davi9 and aristotle & eche to
other . Whiche lettres were lityl appertinent vnto to dictes



and sayenges afor sayd for as moche as they speake of
other matere. And also desired me that don to put the sayd
booke in enprinte. And thus obeying hys request and co
maundement I haue put me in deuoyr to ouersee this hys
sayd booke and beholden as nyghe as I coude holde. It accordeth
wyth the origynall keyng in frensch. And I fynde
nothyng dyscordant therein. Sauf onely in the dyctes
and sayenges of Socrates. Wherin I fynde that my saide
lord hath left out certayn and dyuerse conclusions to
chynge Women. Wherof I meruaylle that my sayd lord
hath not wryton them. ne what hath meuyd hym so to do.
Ne what cause he hadde at that tyme. But I suppose that
som fayr lady hath desired hym to leue it out of his booke.
Or elles he was amorous on somme noble lady. for whos
loue he wold not sette yt in hys booke. or elles for the
very affectyon. loue and good wyll that he hath vnto alle
ladies and Gentyll Women. he thought that Socrates
spared the sothe. And wrote of Women more than trouthe.
Whiche I can not thinke that so trewe a man & so noble a
Philosophre as Socrates was shold wryte other wyse
than trouthe. For If he had made falsyte in wryting of
Women. He ought not ne shold not be beleuyd in hys o
ther dyctes and sayenges. But I apperceyue that my
sayd lord knoweth veryly that suche defaultes ben not
had ne founden in the Women born and dwellyng in the
se parties ne Regyons of the World. Socrates Was a
Greke born in a ferre Contre from hens. Whiche con
tre is alle of other condicions than thys is. And men
& Women of other nature than they ben here in this contre



For I Wote Wel. of What someuer condicion Women ben in
 Grece. the Women of this contre ben right good. Wyse/ play
 sant/ humble/ discrete/ sobre/ chaste/ obedient to their husbon/
 dis/ trewe/ secrete/ stedfast/ euer besy/ & neuer ydle/ Attempe
 rat in speking/ and vertuous in alle their Werkis. or atte
 leste sholde be soo. For Whiche causes so euydent my sayd lord
 as I suppose thoughte it Was not of necessite to sette in his
 booke the saiengis of his Auctor socrates touchyng Women
 But for as moche as I had comādemēt of my sayd lord
 to correcte and amende Where as I sholde fynde faulte / and
 othex fynde I none sauf that he hath left out these dictes &
 saynges of the Women of Grece/ Therfore in accomplissing
 his comandement for as moche as I am not in certayn Whe
 der it Was in my lordis coppe or not + or ellis perauenture
 that the Wynde had blowe ouer the leef/ at the tyme of trās
 lacion of his booke/ I purpose to Wryte the same saynges
 of that Greke Socrates / Whiche Wrote of the Women of
 grece and nothyng of them of this Royame / Whom I sup
 pose he neuer knewe/ For if he had I dar plainly saye that
 he wold haue reserued them inespaciall in his sayd dictes
 Alway not presumyng to put & sette them in my sayd lor
 des booke/ but intende aparte in the refer sayll of the Werkis
 humbly requirynge al them that shal rede this lytyl refer
 sayll that yf they fynde ony faulte tarette it to Socrates
 and not to me Whiche Wryteth as here after foloweth

Socrates sayde That Women ben chapparaylles to
 cacche men/ but they take none but them that wil
 be pure/ or els them that knowe hem not And
 he sayde that there is none so grete empeschment vnto aman



as Ignorance, and Women **A**nd he saide a Woman
that bare fyre, of Whom he saide that the hotter bare the colder
And he saide a Woman seke, of Whom he sayd that the
euyl restyth and dwellyth with the euyl **A**nd he sa-
ide a Woman brought to the Justyce, and many other Wo-
men folowed her weping, of Whome he sayd, the euyl ben-
soy and angry bicause the euyl shal perisse **A**nd he
saide a Jong mayde that lerned to Wyte, of Whom he say-
de that me multiplied euyl vpon euyl **A**nd he sayd
that the Ignorance of a man is knowen in thre thinges
That is to Wete, Whan he hath no thought to vse reason
Whan he can not refrayne hys couetises, And Whan he
is gouerned by the conceit of Women in that he knoweth
that they knowe not **A**nd he sayd vnto hys dyscyples
Wille ye that I enseigne and teche you, howe ye shal mo-
ue escape from alle euyl, And they ansuerd, ye, And
thenne he sayde to them, For What someuer thing that it
be, kepe you and be wel waare that ye obeye not to Women
Who ansuerd to hym agayn, And What sayest thou by
our good mothers & of our susters, He sayde to hem, Suffi-
se you, with that I haue sayd to you, For alle ben sembla-
ble in malice **A**nd he sayde, Who someuer wyll acquere
and gete seyntice, late hym neuer put hym in the gouernaun-
ce of a Woman **A**nd he saide a Woman that made her
fresshe and gaye, to Whom he sayd, Thou resemblest the
fyre, For the more Wode is leyed to the fyre the more Wole
it breime, And the gretter is the hete **A**nd on a tyme
one appoynted hym, What hym semed of Women, He ansuerd
That the Women resemble vnto a Tre called Edelfla



Whyche ys the fayrest tre to beholde and see that may be
 But Wythin it ys ful of Venym **A**nd they sayd to
 hym and demaunded Wherfore he blamed so Women / and
 that he hym self had not comen into thys World ne none
 other men also Wythoute hem . He ansuerd + The Woman
 ys like vnto a Tre named Chassognet + on Whyche tre
 ther ben many thynges sharpe and pyckynge . Whiche hur
 te and pycke them that approche vnto hyt . And yet ne
 uerthelesse that same tre bringeth forth good dates and
 swete + And they demaunded hym / Why he fled from the
 Women + And he ansuerd + For as moche as I see them
 flee and eschewe the good + and comonly do euyl **A**nd
 a Woman sayd to hym + Wylt thou haue any other Woman
 than me And he ansuerde to her Arte not thou ashamed
 toffre thy self to hym + that demaundeth ne desireth the not

These ben the Dyctes & sayengis of the phylosoph
 re Socrates Whiche he Wrote in his booke / And
 certaynly he Wrote no worse than afore is reherfed
 And for as moche as it is acordant + that his Dyctes and
 sayengis shold be had as wel as others therfore I haue set
 te it in the ende of this booke / And also somme psones per
 auenture that haue red this booke in frensshe Wold haue
 arette a grette faulte in me that I had not do my deuoir
 in visiting & ouerseeing of my lordes booke according to his
 desir / And somme other also happely might haue supposed
 that Socrates had Wreton moche more ylle of Women than
 here afore is specified / Wherfore in satisfing of all parties
 & also for excuse of the saide socrates I haue sette these saide



Dyates & sayengis a parte in thende of this booke, to thentet
that yf my sayd lord or any othez persone What someuer he
or she be that shal rede or here it, that If they be not Wel
plesyd Wyth all that they Wyth a penne race it out or el/
lys rente the leef out of the booke, Humbly requyrng and
besechyng my sayd lord to take no displayre on me so pre
sumyng but to paxdone Where as he shal fynde faulte, and
that it please hym to take the labour of thenpryntynge in gre
& thanke, Whiche gladly haue don my dyligence in thacom
plysshynge of his desire and commandement, In Why
che I am bounden so to do for the good reward that I ha
ue resseyuyd of his sayd lordship, Whom I beseeche Al/
myghty god to tennere and to contynue in his vertuous dis
posicion in this World, And after thys lyf to lyue euer/
lastyngly in heuen Amen

Et sic est finis +.+.



PLATE IX.

THE WOOD-CUT OF THE CRUCIFIXION, frontispiece to the "Fifteen O's and other prayers." From the unique copy in the British Museum, 1490-91. [C. 25. c.]

The Fifteen O's probably formed a supplement to an edition of the Primer or Book of Hours, now lost. In the fac-simile upon the opposite page, the borders round the wood-cut in the original have been omitted as detracting greatly from the artistic merit of the representation. It is regarded as the most considerable wood-cut printed in England, *ante* 1500, and has been highly praised by Dr. Dibdin, and by Chatto and Jackson in their Treatise on Wood Engraving, 1838, second edition, 1861.

The design is undoubtedly admirable. Before the acquisition of the copy of the Fifteen O's by the British Museum in 1851, the wood-cut had been supposed to first appear at the end of Wynkyn de Worde's edition of the "Golden Legend," 1493, and this printer received great credit for it until its earlier use by his master was revealed.





PLATE X.

Copy of the drawing contained in the *MS.* of the "Dictes" preserved in the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth. The *MS.* is a small vellum folio, ff. 107, and is numbered 265. The present lithograph is taken from "Regal and Ecclesiastical Antiquities of England," by Joseph Strutt, first edition, 1773, plate 47.

Considerable obscurity hangs over the "head" of Caxton. A portrait of Burchiello, an Italian poet, from his work on Tuscan poetry, 1554, was inaccurately copied by the famous engraver, Faithorne, for Sir Hans Sloane, as the portrait of Caxton. The Rev. John Lewis improved upon this by adding flowing ringlets, and a thick beard to Burchiello's chin; and the transformed Italian poet made his appearance in 1737 as frontispiece to Lewis's life of our printer. This same portrait again served for the Memoir by Ames and Herbert. The "figure in black," in the defaced vignette of the Lambeth *MS.* alone has any claim to be considered an authentic portrait of Caxton, and this claim it is proposed shortly to consider. Dr. Dibdin, in his "Life," pronounces against it, without giving any very cogent reasons for his objection; and Mr. Blades says that "unfortunately the figure is evidently an ecclesiastic as shown by his tonsure"—but that is by no means certain. We must remember, that in 1477 Caxton was nearly sixty years of age, and, not improbably or unnaturally, had lost his hair from the scalp; the scanty locks remaining are certainly not of a formal monkish cut—that may be observed of the figure at the back of the throne on the King's right hand; all the figures in the picture, whose heads are uncovered, have the hair cut straight across the forehead as was the fashion of the time, and Caxton has, with regard to his age, a goodly crop. The black gown is not necessarily ecclesiastical, and furthermore, the garment is edged about with fur, which hardly points to a monastic frock—indeed it much more resembles a civic gown.

The famous antiquary, Strutt, (no mean authority) himself expressly says that he has done "the utmost in his power to render his work a perfect copy of the original," and it is tolerably certain that Strutt, who was hourly dealing with the *minutiæ* of costume, would immediately have observed that the figure in black had been intended for an ecclesiastic—yet he says nothing to warrant the assumption—but on the contrary, he thus describes the vignette: "The king, queen, "and figure with a cap, are in blue and ermin, gold crowns, scepters &c., the

“prince, and the figure next the king are in red, the earl’s coat as it is blazoned, “with blue legs. *Caxton is in black*; the figures behind are in pink, the throne, “arras, and carpet, are red and gold, floor green, walls lead colour, cieling blue “and gold spots, the book is pink and gold leaves.”

A copy of the drawing, engraved by Grignon, forms the frontispiece to the first volume of Horace Walpole’s “Royal and Noble Authors,” Strawberry Hill, 1758, two vols., 8vo; and beneath the engraving is an inscription in which the vignette is described as follows: “Earl Rivers presenting his Book and “*Caxton his Printer* to Edw. 4., the Queen and Prince. . . The Portrait of the “Prince (afterw^{ds} Edw. 5. is the only one known, & has been engraved by Vertue “among the Heads of the Kings. The Person in a Cap and Robe of State is “probably Richard D. of Gloucester, as he resembles the King, and as Clarence “was always too great an Enemy of the Queen to be distinguished by her Brother. “The Book was Printed in 1477 when Clarence was in Ireland, and in the “beginning of the next year he was murdered.”

The testimony of Strutt, though subsequent to that of Lord Orford, is to be regarded as more valuable, but the chief evidence in favour of the authenticity of the portrait, may be adduced from the manuscript itself. It is conjectured that the kneeling figure by the side of the Earl (who is fully identified by the coat armour he is wearing) is that of “Haywarde,” whose name appears as the scribe at the end of the *MS.*; and the date of transcription is also given, *December 29th, 1477, or about six weeks after the appearance of the printed book.* Had the *MS.* been a hundred times more magnificent than it is, it would have “paled its ineffectual fire” before the glory of THE FIRST BOOK PRINTED IN ENGLAND, produced under the auspices of the illustrious Anthony, Earl Rivers, the brother of the Queen, and governor of the Prince of Wales; who was inferior to none of that dark time in learning and politeness—brave as any who followed the fortunes of the Roses—a Knight of the Garter, and distinguished as a warrior and a statesman, and who performed a graceful act in presenting his book and his printer to the King, of which event the *subsequent* ornamented transcript and commemorative vignette is a memorial?





